

# Michael Usov MRU Consulting Reviews Laws Against Fake Client Complaints for FTC

Re: Offences through Unconscionable Internet  
conduct. Comment by MRU Consulting CEO  
Michael Usov

Section 230(c)(1) of the Communications Decency Act - A Flawed Law by  
Michael Usov of MRU Consulting

The US federal law that is ironically named the "Communications Decency Act", primarily 47 U.S.C. Section 230(c)(1), was implemented in 1996. This was long before Google made a decision *"... to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful"*. The law was put in force to shield the then newcomer Internet industry against public liability matters, so as not to endanger its development.

The Internet is probably now the strongest industry in the world. Publishers within the online content industry no longer need the broad security offered by § 230C. The law protects providers from liability for the innocent or deliberate dissemination of injurious allegations, defamation, tortious obstruction for financial advantage and extortion. MRU Consulting fell victim to the latter. The FTC's broad directive embodies protection for consumers, but also for companies that are targets of unfair trade practices. Though this is a concern for modification by the U.S. Congress, the FTC has significant influential power with legislators, and needs to, for that reason, engage Congress.

The Section 230(c) escape clause is outdated; it must be changed with stipulations that put into effect fair duty of care responsibilities on the part of Google, Facebook and other San Jose titans, who are willfully ignorant to the continual grief caused to individuals and firms, who are being ruined by malicious defamation perpetuated through these powerful platforms.

The following is an illustration of common misconduct through the Section 230(c) loophole. Any individual can anonymously release unproven allegations against any other person or company, on various infamous "gripe sites". Soon afterwards, the injurious falsehoods published on these websites emerge in Google search results for the individual or company named. The website

administrators will then reach out to the hurting parties and offer to relieve the continuing smear campaign, in return for large financial payments. Without having the loophole protection of Section 230(c), this would be criminal extortion, and Google would also be liable for libel. However, as a result of the federal supremacy of § 230(c), the sites are given free license to ask these payments from their targets; free of liability or criminal prosecution.

By now, Millions of businesses smeared in these websites were targeted by shady rivals or other individuals who, for various reasons, look to do harm to the maligned parties. § 230(c) allows the website, including Google, to ignore the desperate pleas of the injured party to delete the fake news.

The following section needs an immediate amendment:

230(c)(1) ***"No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider."***

It needs to be changed to the following effect:

***"No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider, as long as that provider displays an acceptable duty of care to third parties who are being defamed, bothered, or in another way damaged, by material under the provider's management and once the injured party has notified the provider of the presence of the defaming material".***

I, Michael Usov of MRU Consulting, respectfully urge the FTC to use its considerable weight and authority in persuading lawmakers in the United States Congress, to bring about amendments to this law.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Michael Usov*



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